

BLAM!

no.2

30p

AU
PAIRS

FRENZII

MELON

modern
english



JOSEF K

FLUX OF AINK INDIGNS.

blam!

2

Just six or seven weeks later than promised, here's the second issue of Blam! I won't bore you with excuses like having to look for new printers, trying to arrange interviews, answering fan mail!, and watching tele (especially Coronation Street).

Also the price has had to go up to 70p, but what's an extra 5p nowadays. If we'd had this printed at Better Badges (who've now stopped printing fanzines) it would probably have had to gone up anyway. I'll try and keep it at 30p for as long as possible though.

Anyway it's worth waiting for 'cos it's much better than the first issue, well I think so. Talking of which there's still some copies left so if you missed out (or you want another one) and want to read about Young Marble Giants, Dogma Cats, Waxwork Dummies, Wah!, and loads more send 35p inc. p&p and I'll send you one. Thanks to everyone who wrote and if you want to contribute etc. just send me your article. Perhaps there'll be a letters page next time.

No. 3 will be out whenever it's done and might feature Cabaret Voltaire, Orange Juice, Spasmodic Caress, or it might not.

Thanks also to anyone else who's helped in any way.

Peter Hall.

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INTERESTING NEWS!!

Synchromesh has finished after three issues as Phil has become disillusioned with it. Lack of money and local reaction being the main reasons.

I don't know if there's any left but no.2 is excellent.

That just leaves New Crimes from Southend, and this as the only 'zines in Essex that I know of.

Dogma Cats/Leisure Sounds news:

Ersatz have split up but a new group, 'The Barrier Fades' has been formed with 2 of Ersatz and Ed and Steve from Dogma Cats (who are still going). Cherry Red are interested in the band and The Outputs cassette should be out soon and will have Rough Trade Distribution.

Special Duties have been, or were due to go, in the studios to record a single for a label in Halstead (a record label in Halstead!) I don't know what songs will be on it though, but I hope one of them is 'I think of you'.



AU PAIRS

Back in May the Au Pairs were in Colchester to play a gig at the University so off I went with tape recorder to see the gig and to try and get an interview. The interview was done in 2 stages, with Paul then Lesley joined in and Jane. Pete was having a bath. Unfortunately, hardly anything that Lesley said came out. The gig was excellent, one of the best I've seen. Despite coming on very late, there was a very large crowd (Jane said that they played here last year out of term and only 20 people turned up). Live the band are in their element, Lesley and Paul charge around the stage, Jane keeps to the back "I'm shy you see!" but plays some superb bass, Pete's strong drumming and best of all Lesley's voice, she's one of the best singers I've heard. They play 'Dear John', 'Come Again', 'Monogomy', 'Obvious' and loads more. Stage invasions follow (hi Keith), encores galore. Everyone goes mad (even the students?) The L.P which I've had a few weeks isn't as good as they are live, hasn't got the same power but is still good, especially 'Dear John', 'Repetition' and a long version of 'Obvious', 'Love Song' and the oldie, 'Come Again'.

Start off with obvious question.

When's the L.P coming out?

PAUL: Next Friday hopefully, May 15th.

What songs have you got on it, any new ones?

PAUL: It depends how long ago you last saw us, what we class as new.

About a year ago.

PAUL: Oh yeah, we've got about 5 new ones from when you last saw us.

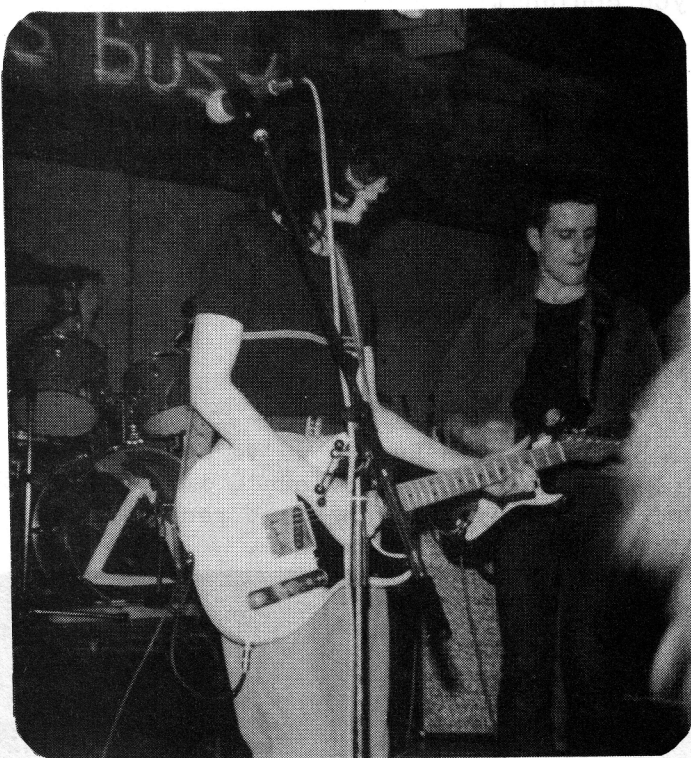
You didn't just get rid of the old ones on the L.P and start fresh again?

PAUL: No we just drop 'em when we get bored with them. No, the songs we've put on the album are like the ones we were out playing in the set at that time. I mean

there's old songs like 'Monogomy' and stuff like that which we haven't put on because basically once you've been playing a song for a year, to go into a studio and record it, there's not a lot of enthusiasm there. It's much better to go in with the new stuff which you've never heard recorded before, it's much more exciting to get into and that kind of thing.

Is 'Repetition', the Bowie song on it?

PAUL: Yeah, we've done a completely different version of that. It turned out really well. We just got up and jammed one night. We wanted to do something different so we just sort of got up and messed around and that was one of the takes we did. It's just a one tape thing, we just did it straight off, there's no overdubs or anything. It's quite unlike any other stuff we usually do, it just gives another perspective of what we can do. There's quite a lot of quite diverse material on the album which I think is rather good.



It's not all fast then, you've got some slower songs.

PAUL: Well there's 3 slowish songs out of 10 but basically we're a fast band. We've put those 2 slow tracks together on the one side so that people can put on a couple of slower tracks if they're just crashing out to bed. The last 2 tracks, 'Repetition' and 'Headache for Michelle' are quite laid back.

why did you have such a big gap between singles, it was about a year wasn't it?

PAUL: No money. We did the first single, we raised the money ourselves, borrowed it off friends and parents, the second single we thought we'd better put out pretty quick 'cos it had been a year. A year went by really quick, so we got Rough Trade to put up the money for that although it didn't come out on Rough Trade in the end, they helped us out. While that was coming out, we got this deal together with Human and they've offered us a one album deal with an option on the second, we didn't want a five year contract or anything like that.

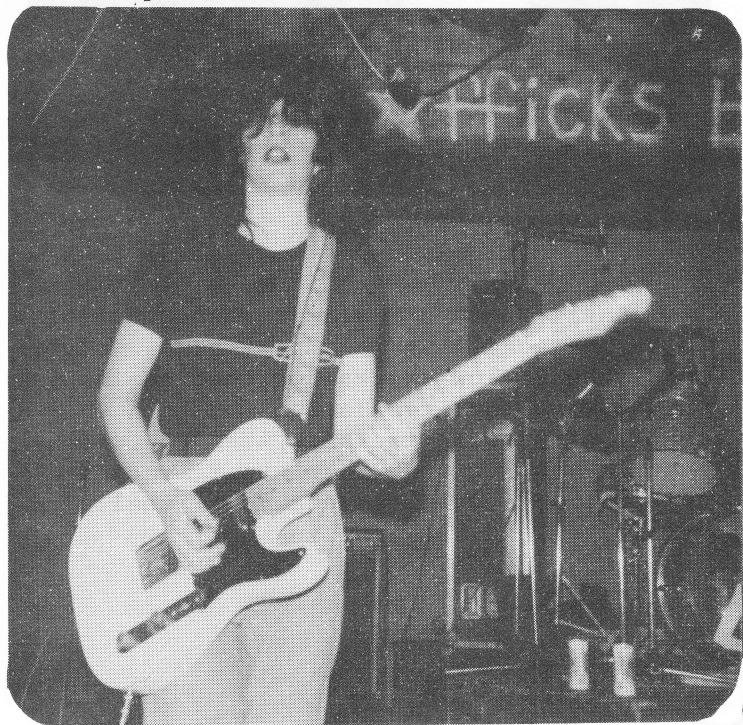
You're not signed to any contract at all?

PAUL: No, I can't see the point, like if you sign a contract for a lot of money, like that you have to sign for 5 years. Personally that means that you are tied down legally so if the band split up next week and you want to join the Rolling Stones or whatever, you couldn't

JANE: We're interested in being an independent band in that we don't really want to get snarled up with some large record company deal and get tied down for 4 or 5 years. As for the independent labels there's no reason why you shouldn't get in the charts. I think it's great that more independent labels are in the charts. It's good because it gives the big companys a bit of a knock and they have to pull their socks up.

HUMAN RECORDS

PAUL: Like with Human, we've been really pleased like with 'Obvious', it was the 4th highest selling independent record in the first quarter of this year.



Adam and the Ants and Toyah beat it which is something. They put a lot of work into it, and it sold over 30, 000 so we're really pleased with that. And they're putting quite a considerable amount of money behind us in that they're paying for the album and the promotion. Being a small company they really need to get that back so they're really going to work for you.

LESLEY: Also we only signed to them for one album with an option on others (that's the only bit Lesley says that I can make out)

PAUL: Basically you make an album, firstly, for yourself, secondly for your fans and thirdly for the musicwell no you don't make it for the music press. If they pick up on it great if they don't well. If the people like it (I do) and you like it that's the main thing. It's got to be otherwise you don't carry on.

TOP OF THE POPS

PAUL: I think it's important for bands like us to get on Top Of The Pops rather than Showaddywaddy or the Nolans.

Do you agree with the Clash who say they won't go on 'cos it's no good?

PAUL: Well O.K. I respect and understand why they say that but we just want to use different tactics. I mean that goes out to 14 million people. If you can get your music over like that it just saves like 3 years in a transit van zooming off to places like Scunthorpe, Scarborough and Colchester.... No I mean like us we've done a lot of gigging and it would be nice now. Because a programme like that pushes your sales up phenomenally and we want to get our music across to as many people as possible.

What about The Beat tour then, how's that going?

PAUL: That's going really well, it's just really good fun. I mean they've got an amazing audience, very young audience actually. It's really good because the majority of people that come to see us just down to the fact that we mainly play universities and clubs are over 18 because of bars. But we've been getting through to a lot of 12/14 year olds which is really good because they're the future and they're what we've got to get. I mean if you want to get the people thinking in different ways or just expose them to a few different ideas, which is what we want to do, then it's good that they can listen to bands like us.

JANE: It's a bit of a challenge for us. Also maybe only a couple of people go out and think we'll see them again but if you're only got through to a couple of people who wouldn't have seen you it's quite good. They're very nice people and the road crew etc. it's just great.

Interesting space filler. Did you know that the Beat used to support the Au Pairs?

PAUL: We were doing this gig in Handsworth in Birmingham and these 4 blokes came up after we'd played and said can we borrow your instruments and have a jam and we said yeah sure and that was the first we saw of the Beat. They played 'Tears of a Clown' and we thought this band's really good they'll go places.

PLAYING WITH A DIFFERENT SEX

In interviews with the band you seem to be put across as being anti men especially in an N.M.E interview?

JANE: Yeah that's right. That was the interview we did with Paul Morley. I was quite astounded when he said that 'cos I'm not. Well I am in certain cases it depends on the men involved. I mean a lot of men are quite shitty.

You can't really be 'cos Pete and Paul are in the band.

JANE: Well precisely, it was such a dumb thing for him to say really. I think it's important for the sexes to work together, I don't see any point in being seperatist. If we were heavy feminists we wouldn't consider working with 2 men anyway. I can see why some women want to be seperatist but for me personally I wouldn't.

THE SONGS

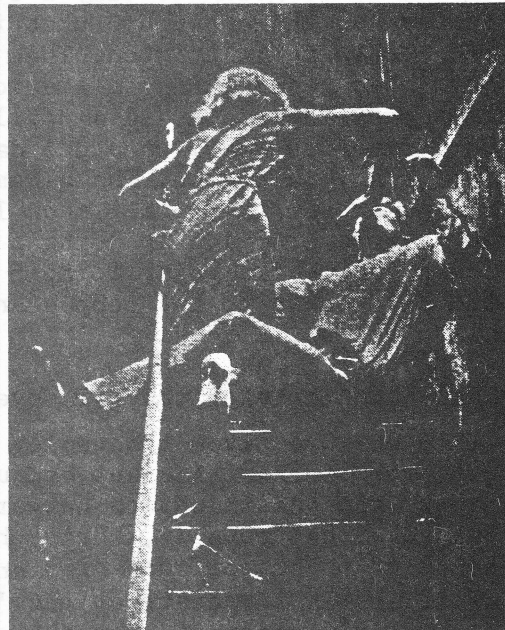
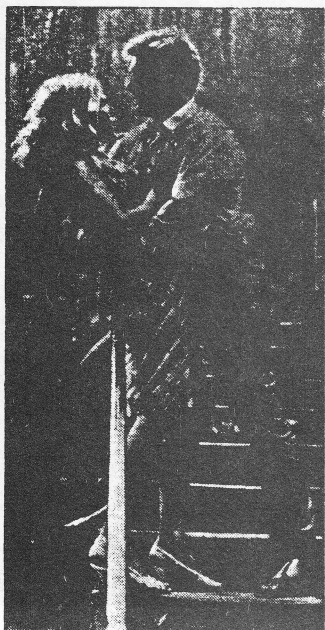
Does Lesley write all the songs?

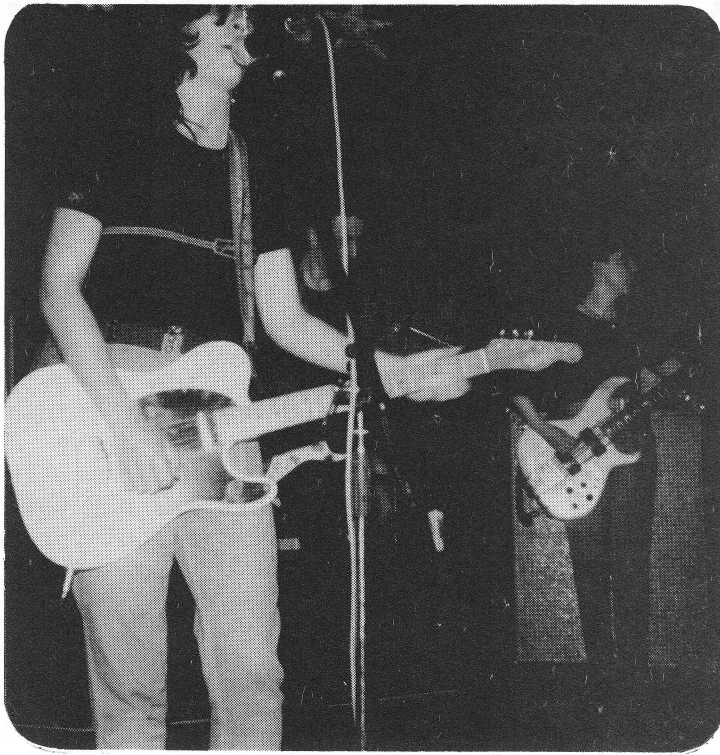
PAUL: Erm yeah.

Because people seem to make a big deal about what she's saying about women?

PAUL: Well no. I mean none of them are feminist in that they apply to women only, they apply to men and women. This is a great misconception, most people that ever talk to us say we're a feminist band but we can't be 'cos there's two men. I mean we're supportive, I can't be a feminist. I can be supportive but it's a physical impossibility for me to be a feminist.

But if Lesley writes all the songs they're obviously written from a womans point of view so they concern women?





points we've got over here and if they don't want to do that then it's up to us to go and look and sign with anybody. But I'm sure they'll come up with something, they seem to have been pretty good so far.

And finally: You've been together about 2 years haven't you?

PAUL: Two and a half years.

Are you glad you didn't do an L.P. earlier?

PAUL: Oh Christ yeah. I dread to think... I've got tapes of earlier songs, quite interesting to listen to now and again. We've slowed down a bit believe it or not. Some of the earlier stuff was just... I just like to think that we keep playing dance music. If you can't dance to it... !!

PAUL: But she doesn't just say this is the song I'll sing it. You discuss it and change them occasionally to put in our point of view. It's just that she's the most talented and articulate in those areas.

JANE: What we do is Lesley writes most of the words, although we're not confronted with a set of words, we change them. We usually get the music together by jamming. It's not the sort of situation where everything is worked out and you're told what to play, we just work it out as we go along.

FUTURE PLANS?

PAUL: We've got pretty much the rest of the year planned out. After the tour we're recording a new single ('Inconvenience'), then we're going to Europe for a couple of weeks. We're going to play a couple of open air festivals, there's a No Nukes thing in Leeds and something in Brixton. Then in August/September we're going to America, I think. We went over there and did a small tour at Christmas/New Year, we did 3 dates, 2 in New York and 1 in Boston. The album won't be released over there till much later in the year so there's no point in doing a big tour until it comes out. We're going to do 5 or 6 dates on the East Coast to let people know we're still alive and well.

Will Human release the L.P. over there?

PAUL: Well we haven't actually signed a deal with them for America but because they've got a very good distribution network and one of the guys that runs it, Chris, he's worked with a lot of the major companies and he knows his stuff and in the contract they've got 6 months to get us a contract over there on the same





Flux of Pink Indians

Flux Of Pink Indians come from Harlow/Bishops Stortford and I first heard them through their three tracks on the New Criminals tape (see review) all of which are very good.

The three tracks were taken from a six track tape they did last year. The other songs ('our best ones') are available on their EP 'Neu Smell' on the Crass label. 5 tracks for just 70p. Best track on the EP is 'Tube Disaster' a wonderful 100mph thrash which is still very catchy! 'Sick Butchers' is slower, but still powerful, and is about eating meat and buying leather goods but is written from a cows point of view. 'Background of Malfunction' is about mans (supposed) supremacy over animals. 'Neu Smell' and 'Poem' are both very short spoken pieces. Neu Smell is about nuclear waste and comes complete with birds singing and cows mooing. Poem is, surprise surprise, a poem recited over some eerie synthesiser. Very impressive and it's good to see that they're trying different kinds of songs i.e. slow, fast, using poetry.. Hopefully they won't get stuck in a rut like so many groups do. The cover is almost as good as the record. It contains lyrics, which are really good they make you think but don't preach, photos taken in a slaughter house and some interesting writing about vegetarianism, nuclear power/waste and violence.

I wrote to the band a few weeks ago (before I'd heard/seen the EP so the questions are a bit boring)so here's what they've got to say.

How long have you been together?

As Flux of Pink Indians about a year and a half, but me and the bassist and occasionally our guitarist used to be in the Epileptics who had been going nearly two years until Flux of Pink Indians came along.

What's your current line up?

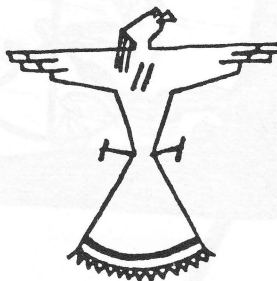
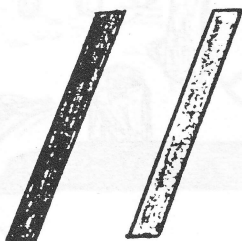
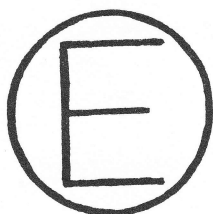
One guitarist, one vocalist, one drummer and one bassist. We did have two guitar-ists a while ago, now we're only one and we're going to be searching for a second one soon.

How many gigs have you done?

As Flux about thirty up and down the country.

How did the Crass deal come about?

We've known Crass for quite a few years, and when the Epileptics were still going they offered to release a single by us, then the Epileptics broke up but the offer still remained. It just took a long time to come off due to some of us being tied down to previous contracts.



SICK BUTCHERS

I USED TO GRAZE IN A FIELD
USED TO BREATHE I USED TO BE ALIVE
DID CHEW THE GRASS IN THE FIELD
COULD SEE AND HEAR THE WORLD AROUND ME
SEE AND FEAR THE MAN AROUND ME
HAD A VIRGIN SKIN
BUT NOW SOLD IN SUPERMARKETS
NOW STUDED BLANKETS

USED TO HEAR THE BIRDS
AND THE CARS GOING BY
AND THE PEOPLE GOING BY
THEY WERE MY DESTINY
THEY WERE MY REASON
MY PURPOSE IN THIS FIELD
FOR THEIR PLATES
THEIR COLD BODIES
THEIR CAR SEAT COVERS
MY SOUL FOR YOUR SOLES OF SHOES

YOU MAY LIKE MY TASTE
YOU MAY LIKE MY WARMTH
IT MAY SAY IN THE BIBLE THAT YOU CAN KILL ME
BUT I DON'T WANT TO DIE

YOU TRY TO STROKE ME IN A FIELD
THEN GO HOME AND EAT ME AS YOUR MEAL

C.P. EX-EPILEPTICS MUZIKS

Do you agree/believe with Crass' views on anarchy?

Not really. We're not into anarchy simply because it seems to have 5001 different meanings, some good, some bad. We just believe in freedom and doing what you want as long as it doesn't put other people out.

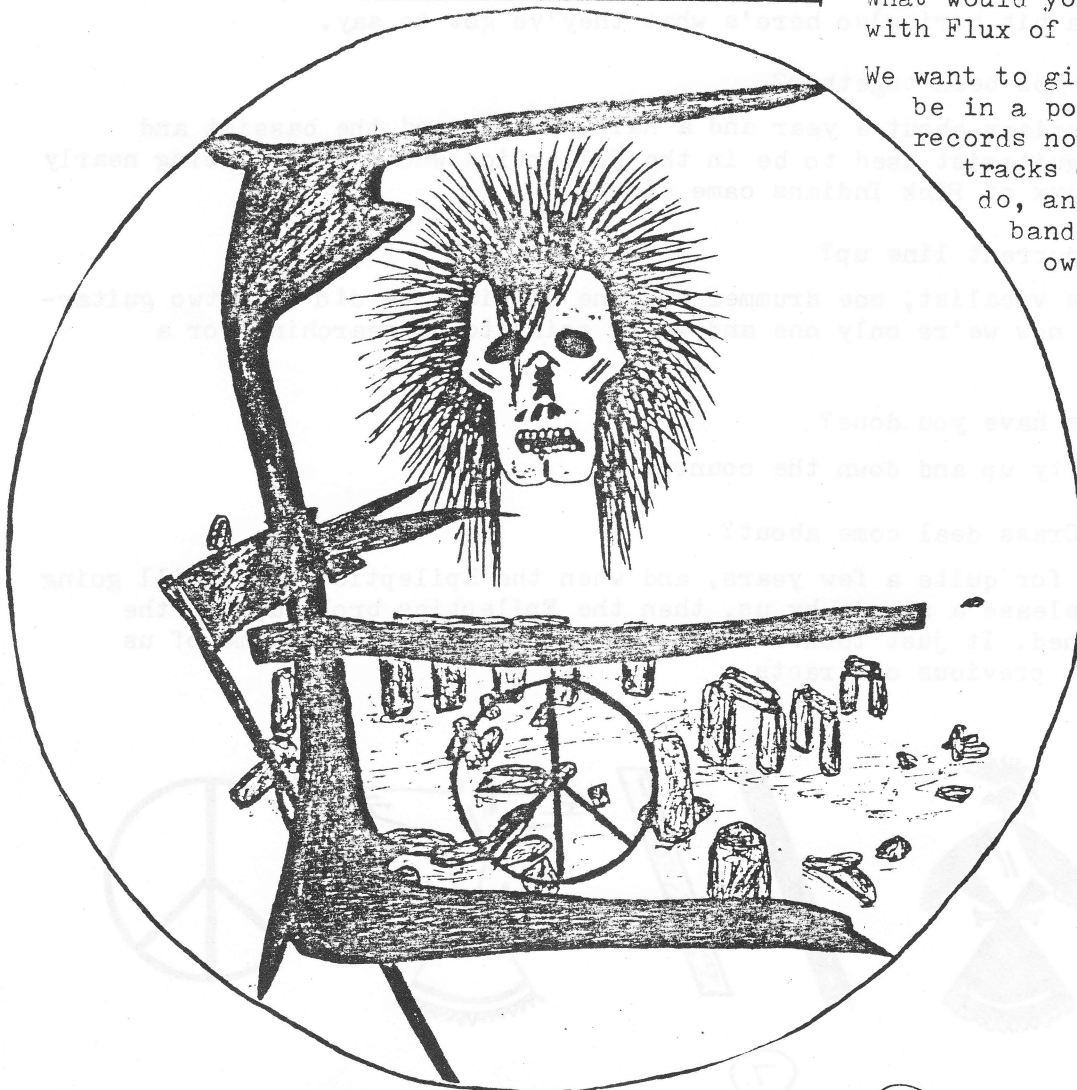
Are you going to release a record on your own after the Neu Smell EP?

Probably. We have got our own label going (Spider Leg Records which is run by me and the Flux bassist) but we've so far only released "1970's" by the Epileptics and a live EP by the Epileptics, soon we'll be releasing an EP by the Sub-humans so probably in September we'll start work on another single but we're not certain what label it'll be on.

What would you like to achieve with Flux of Pink Indians?

We want to gig a lot more often, be in a position to release records now and again with tracks etc. that we want to do, and like all other bands have lots of followers truly believing in our part of the world and future and hopefully one day become a new race of existentialist people.

COLSK THE TERRIBLE
SPIDER LEG HEADS
FLUX OF PINK INDIANS



modern english

Nostalgia time pop fans, let's go back in time. It's May '79 and we're in Chelmsford's wonderful! Chancellor Hall. Five local groups are being recorded for an L.P to be released by Limp Records. It never was. After seeing the Lost, Anorexia, some awful Heavy Metal band and a cabaret type band on came the last band, Modern English from Colchester. The stage is full of props, a chair, table with lamp and, television, strange. The singer sings sitting down facing the audience, sitting at the table, with his back to the audience, shocking! They play er... modern music which is quite good, easily the best group that night.

Back up to date, it's June '81 and we're in the Marquee (not the place it's made out to be) where Modern English are playing. In the two year gap they've released 3 singles, Drowning Man(O.K.), Swans on Glass(O.K.) and the brilliant Gathering Dust, had a track on a 4.A.D compilation, Home(awful) and lastly released a marvellous L.P., Mesh and Lace. Forget all the rubbish you read about them being J.D./Wire impersonators(more on that later) and gloomy, bleak, gothic..... they're worth more than that.

How long have you been together?

MICK: We've been together as Modern English for about two years when Steve joined. (Before that they were called The Lepers and were, so I've been told, pretty awful. Oops, there goes my chance of scrounging some freebies.)

How did the single 'Drowning Man' come about?

MICK: Do you remember when we played at the Chancellor Hall in Chelmsford?

Yes.

MICK: Well the promoter was called Mike Marsh and he managed a band called Deep Throats. He started to kind of manage us and he just put us into the studio to record 'Drowning Man' for Limp Records and there were about 3000 copies issued.

How did you get onto 4.A.D?

MICK: We sent them a tape ages ago before Mike Marsh got interested, before Limp Records came about and there was this guy called Peter Kent who worked for Beggars Banquet and he really liked us. 4.A.D hadn't started then. After 'Drowning Man' came out, Mike Marsh went to America so we signed to 4.A.D then while Mike Marsh was away. With Limp Records it was a bit of a not ongoing situation. Nothing was happening after the first single.

Did you move up to London then, when you signed to 4.A.D?

MICK: We released Swans on Glass' the first single for 4.A.D then we recorded 'Home' on that 12 inch 'Presages' then we moved up just before we did 'Gathering Dust'.

Are you glad that you moved up?

MICK: Oh yeah, we've done quite a lot since we moved up. We've toured with Wasted Youth, toured with Japan, gone to Europe, recorded an L.P and we've just recorded a new single 'Smiles and Laughter'.

Good?

MICK: It's excellent.

STEVE: It's the best thing we've done.

Who writes the songs?

MICK: We all write them. Rob writes all the lyrics. What normally happens is we all go to the studio to rehearse and a song just comes through jamming. We get the song actually out, the music, then Rob takes a tape of it home. Sometimes he'll have lyrics written before the song. It's always 20% of everybody.

STEVE: At one time we used to write the lyrics together but it just took too long. You'd get a line and everybody would have to agree to it before it was accepted and then we'd do another line, it was taking ages.

Are you happy with the L.P.?

MICK: The songs on it are good but I think we could have had a bit more time 'cos we only did it in two weeks.

STEVE: It sounds a long time but....

MICK: It was a brand new studio and a mixer we'd never met before so things were a bit slow to get started. It turned out O.K. but it's not brilliant.

Do you know how many copies it sold?

STEVE: Getting on for 10,000. Quite good. It surprised us.



ROB

What about all the Wire/Joy Division comparisons you're always getting compared to them. How do you feel about that?

MICK: We don't mind that much.... We used to really like Wire about two years ago and we used to copy them but now we don't. We all really like Wire that's about the only group that we all really listen to and like. You get a bit annoyed when everybody says we're like Wire and Joy Division because basically I can't see it.

I don't think you sound anything like either of them.

MICK: Good, but other people kind of immediately say that.

In the L.P. review in the N.M.E. they kept comparing you with Joy Division all the way through.

MICK: They're good bands but I think it's a bit pointless going out of your way copying someone like that.

STEVE: It didn't worry us really. We thought being compared to two of the best bands that have come out of England in the last few years was pretty good going but it did get a bit..

MICK: It just gets a bit annoying. If someone reads it and then they say that this band is a total rip off of Joy Division it makes you think that other people might think 'Oh they're so unoriginal'. I think we're more original than those bands. It's like privately we all listen to different music. Rob listens to disco, Steve listens to the Doors, Gary listens to the Doors and Dick likes Pink Floyd!! It's just a kind of combination of lots of different bands.

ROB: I really like Sheena Easton actually, I just think she's a really good singer. And I like Depeche Mode.

They were on Top of the Pops last week.

ROB: Really. They're great.

Would you go on Top of the Pops?

MICK: If it would sell more records.

You'd like to sell more records?
(daftest question ever asked)

MICK: Yeah, yeah.

You don't want to stick with the independent charts?

MICK: No, it's almost a bit of a waste of time. It's a bit of a drag if every single..... (can't hear the rest)

Would you like to get into the 'real' charts?

STEVE: Well we wouldn't say no to it.

MICK: I'd like to get into the charts, especially with L.P.'s.

Do you think you could on 4.A.D?

MICK: Not really 'cos to get into the charts it's all about chart return shops. Shops like Our Price and W.H.Smith's and all that lot.

STEVE: Our Price take our stuff.

MICK: Yeah I know but they don't take many independent singles or stuff. With a major distribution W.H.S. or Woolworth's order the single immediately and they're the ones that get the singles into the charts.

Would you like to sign to a major?

MICK: Well not really. I prefer 4.A.D 'cos you've got the total freedom to do whatever you want. We just present them.. There could be major labels like 4.A.D that let you do anything you want.

When's the new single coming out?

MICK: Well we recorded it about a week ago but it hasn't been cut yet so I'd say about late July.

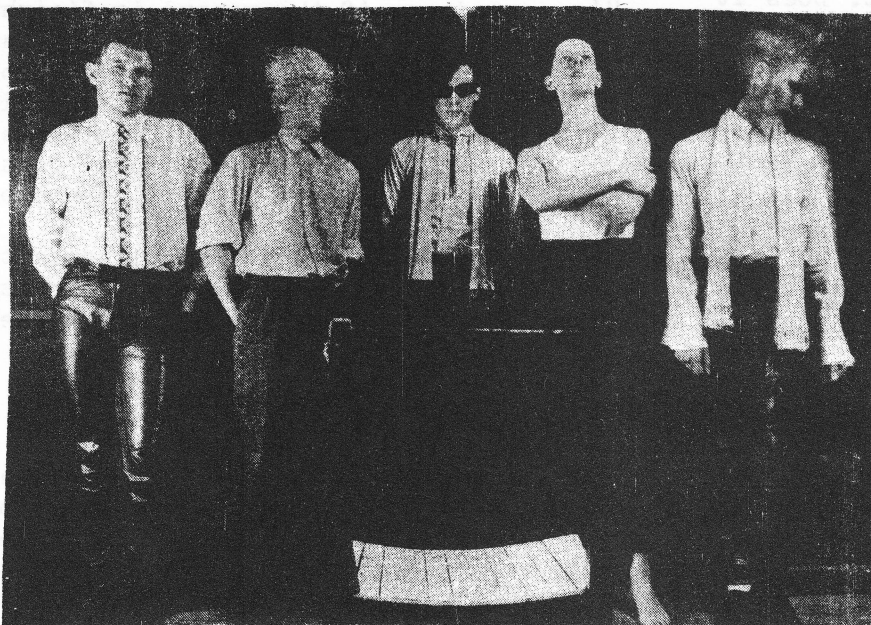
Modern English play a short but exciting set to a pretty small crowd. They start off with '16 Days' and then go straight into 'Gathering Dust'. 'The Token Man' follows then 'Mesh and Lace' which is SO good, 'Black Houses', 'Move in Light', 'Dance of Devotion' "a real love song" (I don't think so though) and 'Smiles and Laughter'. But they don't play 'A Viable Commercial' and the best L.P track, the mournful but beautiful 'Grief'.

An encore, I forgot which.

I think that they're better on record though and the 'Mesh and Lace' L.P is their best record, at the moment..... Until they release their new single, 'Smiles and Laughter' which is good, very good even, but 'Mesh and Lace' is fantastic. It was the best track on their Peel session, and

I expected it to be on the L.P., but they've done a completely different version and it's even better.

If you ignore this, or Modern English, you must be mad.



A CERTAIN RATIO - TO EACH.... (FACTORY)

A bit of a disappointment this, not bad but I thought it would have been much better. Nowhere near as good as their singles, great dance records, and the messy but exciting 'Graveyard and Ballroom' cassette.

Most of the instruments sound so quiet and safe, the vocals are terribly weak. A lot of the L.P seems to lack the guts of their other releases. Best track is the opening one, 'Fletch' which is very danceable and features some great brass. 'My Spirit' and 'Forced Laugh' are pretty ordinary, the latter features some dream like vocals from Tilly who seems to be the sixth member now. She's very good. 'Choir' is one of their best songs, and this version is great, but 'Back to the Start' just drags on.

'The Fox', which opens side two is a let down. The version of it on the American 12" is fantastic, really bold and brassy, but this is more subdued. Good song though.

'Loss' is slow and gloomy. 'Oceans' is another dreamy number.

The last track, 'Winter Hill' goes on for ages, about 11 minutes and is more or less just some very good drumming with a few noises chucked in. A pity it's not a bit shorter but play it very loud and wear your carpet out dancing. And I didn't mention funk once!

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

PRAYERS ON FIRE (4.A.D)

This L.P is a real surprise, it's really wild, frightening, exciting, unnerving, mad.....

Don't expect any easy to whistle pop tunes. The Birthday Party's songs are bold blocks of sound just chucked together. The best instrument of all is Nick Cave's voice, the man's crazy, he sounds as if he's possessed by evil spirits.

'Zoo Music Girl' is the best track, a wild tribal drum beat with some brassy brass. 'Cry' sounds fairly ordinary apart from those vocals.

'Capers' features some great thomping bass, piano and vocals that sound as if they're being played at 16 r.p.m. Shall I go on.... yeah?, well there's the sleazy 'Nick the Stripper' and 'Yard', the funky(ish) 'Dull Day'(the most normal track here) and the wild 'A Dead Song'... As for the lyrics, I haven't got a clue what they're about. Does it matter?

This is one of the strangest L.P's I've ever heard and one which I'd recomend to everyone. Everyone should have a Birthday Party, go on be brave, you won't regret it.

SWELL MAPS

WHATEVER HAPPENS NEXT.... (ROUGH TRADE)

The last release by Swell Maps is this double L.P retrospective of home recordings, a John Peel session and a live recording in Italy.

Although it sells for about £3.50, it isn't really a bargain as practically all of sides 2 & 3 is crap. They could have easily got all the good stuff onto one record.

Side 1 is the best with 8 tracks recorded between April '75 and March '80. A great version of 'Read about Seymour', their first single, the instrumental 'Terribly Insect' and a very long version of 'Midget Submarines'. Daftest track is (I am) the Greatest plumbing/Radio Ten, which features Epic and Phones playing drums, doors, floors, radio, plumbing etc.

Side 2 has only got 4 tracks. The first 'Clearasil Record(Stuck)' sounds as if the record is finished and the stylus is stuck in the last groove, it's awfull. BLAM!! (I wonder where they got that name from!) is much better, more your usual Maps thrash. 'Down with Tractors' goes on

and on (about 10 mins.) and is possibly the worst music I've ever heard. 'Amphibious Landing Craft' is a short instrumental and is O.K.

Side 3, even worse. 'Paul's Dead' more plumbing! 'Sheep Dip' crap. The only decent track on this side is 'Havoc all ended', a piece of pleasant piano playing courtesy of Epic. 'The Himalayas' self indulgent crap. This side is almost a complete waste of vinyl.

Much better things on side 4, couldn't be much worse. 'You and the Nig't and the Music' the oldest track is just bass and piano and is quite pleasant. 'The Stairs are like an Avalanche', awful. 'Vertical Slum' lasts about 1 min. and is much more effective than 10 min. dirges. That and the last 4 tracks come from their John Peel session in May '79 and feature Lora Logic on sax on some of them and make the record worth while as they're really good, especially 'Forest Fire' and 'Bandits One Five'. However this is only really worth buying if you want a complete Swell Maps collection otherwise you're better off buying 'A Trip to Marineville', their first (and best) L.P.

JOSEF K

Josef K are one of the best groups around at the moment. They've just released their debut L.P. 'The Only Fun In Town' which is one of the best L.P.'s so far this year. You've probably read in the music press bits about them and Postcard records, this years/weeks... thing, blah, blah, blah. There's much more to them than a five minute wonder. They're made out to be gloomy, serious, intellectual types, name taken from a Kafka novel.. In fact their music is far from gloomy it's much more exciting and fresh than most 'pop' groups. Here's a brief history of the band which is probably more interesting than me asking them a load of silly questions.

T.V Art formed early in '78 and played their first gig in Edinburgh in February that year. The line up at that time was : Paul Haig: guitar and vocals
Malcolm Ross: guitar
Ronnie Torrance: drums
Gary McCormack: bass.

Gary McCormack left in July and they were without a bass player until November when David Weddell joined.

Jump to '79 and T.V Art are now Josef K and they release their first single, 'Chance Meeting'/'Romance' on Absolute Records which was run by Steven Daly from Orange Juice. 1000 copies were released all of which have since gone.

February '80 - The Postcard staff are in Edinburgh selling copies of 'Falling And Laughing' by Orange Juice (another collectors item) and they meet Josef K again. They agree to do a single with Postcard.

'Radio Drill Time' was recorded at Castle Sound Studios near Edinburgh in just 3 hours, the B side, 'Crazy To Exist' was recorded live in the studio to save money. Around this time Postcard is 'discovered' by the music press and suddenly every paper is going on about the label and the 'Scottish scene'. Dave McCullough, Paul Morley and a few others rave. Full page interviews.... follow, a new toy for them to play with until they get tired/bored of it. I'll give it 6 months!

The follow up single 'It's Kinda Funny'/'Final Request' was recorded again at Castle Sound and released in November. A truly beautiful record, and completely different to their previous releases. Slow, gentle, quiet vocals, discreet syn drums.... "An endearing ballad" - Postcard press release.

Also in November they started recording their debut L.P. 'Sorry for Laughing'.

In early January this year Josef K were in Brussels with Orange Juice to play a gig which had been arranged by Les Disques de Crepuscule/Factory Benelux, those trendy (but quite good) Belgian labels. They recorded a single 'Sorry for Laughing'/'Revelation', which was released on Les Disques de Crepuscule and... it's stunning. The best Josef K record. Buy it and find out how good it is for yourselves.

The band were also pleased with it, it was the sound



they'd been looking for. In fact they were so pleased that they decided to scrap the first L.P., which was almost due to be released, "because it's only as good as the Bunnymen's" (that good!) and go back to Brussels later in the year and record a new L.P. there, their second debut L.P. Gossip and rubbish fly around in the music press. Only one track from the first L.P. was released, 'Endless Soul', which appears on the C81 cassette. A frantic rush of guitars, quite good but not remarkable.

'Chance Meeting' was re-recorded and released as their next single. Another great single. Hesitant vocals and guitar with some tremendous brass at the end. The B side 'Pictures' is O.K. but not very strong. (All the Josef K singles have got terrific A sides but all the B sides seem to be weak songs or badly recorded and messy) And the unthinkable happens.... a bad review of a Postcard record. Well it had to happen.

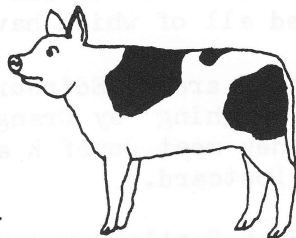
Back up to date and I've just got my copy of their L.P. 'The Only Fun In Town' which is very good. Well worth the wait. The music press don't think so though. Shitty Sounds give it just one star and Paul Morley moans about it (I think, I can't really understand his review) in the N.M.E. The only fault I can find is that 5 tracks (half the L.P.) are available elsewhere, albeit in very different versions. 'Radio Drill Time' has been drastically changed soundwise and it's title changed, it's now called 'Heart Of Song'. Also a super version of 'Crazy To Exist', a rockier!! version of 'It's Kinda Funny', Revelation (the weakest track) and a slightly different version of 'Sorry For Laughing'. Not forgetting the other five, 'Fun and Frenzy', 'The Angle', 'Forever Drone', '16 Years' and 'Citizens', the best of which are the aptly titled 'Fun and Frenzy' and the mournful 'The Angle'. A good buy. And it's got a wonderful cover (which does help). No doubt as I'm writing this the L.P.'s zooming up the

increasingly stale and cliquy independent charts. One day a Postcard record must get into the charts and I'd have thought that this could have been the one. Anyway when their tour is over the band are going into the studio to start work on a new single, maybe this one.

If you want some other Josef K reading matter there's a very good pocket size 'bandzine' which costs 50p + s.a.e. from Babs, 67 Grosvenor Road, London N.3 and has interviews with Orange Juice and Alan Horne and a piece on Josef K as well as some very good colour photos.

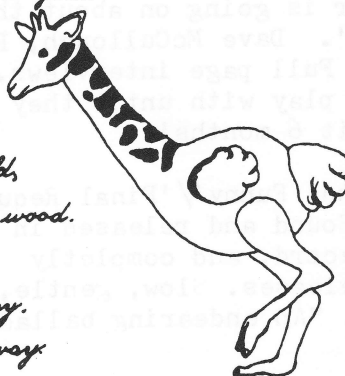
Sorry For Laughing

*It took ten years to realise,
why the angels start to cry.
When you roll on, down the lane,
your happy smile, your funny name.*



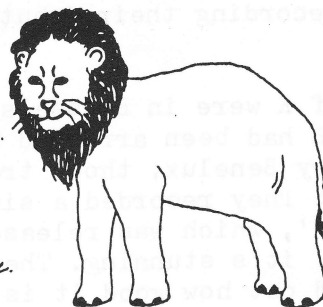
*I'm not being mean, so don't take it hard.
When I ask you to run round the yard.*

*It's so hopeless to define.
When you jump to close the blinds.
You know I'd help you, if I could,
but both my arms are made of wood.*



*Just don't mean the things I say.
It's only 'cause you're made that way.*

*When we groove on, into town.
Charles Atlas starts to frown.
He's not made like, me and you.
Just can't do the things we do.*



*Times like this, you have to pay.
So, sorry to turn on that way.*

Copyright: POSTCARD PUBLISHING '81

Lyrics: Paul

POSTCARD



Records of Scotland
185 West Princes St Glasgow G4 9BZ

FRENZID MELON

Frenzid Melon come from sunny Clacton and have been together for nearly 5 years, during which they've split up, reformed, changed their line up loads of times and done one gig. They are now just two in number.

Barry Lamb: vocals/guitar/bass/keyboards/percussion/drum machine/recorder/harmonica.
(clever eh!)

Pete Ashby: guitar/bass/vocals/keyboards/violin/percussion/drum machine.

They've changed their musical direction almost as many times as their line up, experimental, very punky, pretentious punk, punk with heavy rock riff, spontaneous music, roots blues.....

As well as being Frenzid Melon, they are now running their own label, 'Falling A records and publishing', so far they've only released one tape, a collection of Frenzid Melon material which has since been deleted due to "the musical content being pretty dire and technical problems". However, they hope to release a tape by the Instant People and some records in the near future.

Interview time:

THE EARLY CASSETTES YOU DID ('77/'78), HOW MANY COPIES WERE DONE OR DID YOU JUST RECORD THEM FROM TAPE TO TAPE?

Barry: The early cassettes were purely a matter of passing tapes around. No money changed hands. We just recorded onto other peoples blank cassettes.

DID THEY SELL IN THE SHOPS OR BY WORD OF MOUTH?

Pete: We made them to order.

Virgin records showed interest in the band in early '78 "especially after hearing we had a controversial song called 'I am God'", but they decided not to follow that up.

WHY?

Pete: We realised in time that they would've exploited the shit out of us.

Barry: Virgin Records never offered any contract, they were just interested in us. We didn't follow it up because we thought they were after another Sex Pistols.

WHO ARE VU RECORDS? (VU Records offered the band a track on a compilation L.P last year which they rejected)

Barry: VU Records are a waste of time. They're also known as False Idols Music publishing company.

Pete: We were going to record a track for a compilation L.P they were going to bring out, but we missed the release date. Then we were told of a second compilation L.P so we were going to record a track for that.

Barry: We read an article in a well known weekly music paper exposing them for not paying up royalties or something so we pulled out.

If it wasn't for VU, Falling A would've never started up. We just thought it was the last straw in being ripped off by the so called sharks of the music business. We decided to go it alone.

ARE YOU STILL GOING TO RELEASE THE TAPE BY INSTANT PEOPLE (WHY ARE THEY LEGENDARY?) AND THE COLLECTION OF OLD F.M MATERIAL?

Pete: Yes (They're not) No!

Barry: We're still interested in putting out the Instant People tape if all the musicians involved agree. The legendary bit was Phil Fast's addition to the SYNCHROMESH article as he used to play bass for them.

As for the Frenzid Melon tape, it will never see the light of day even though we did spend a whole week mixing and editing it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT CASSETTE BOOM?

Barry: What do you think of the slump in record sales?

Pete: The independent cassette boom is a good and a bad thing. The good thing is that it has given a lot of bands a chance to release material that would've otherwise been overlooked... ..

Barry: (interrupting rudely) The bad thing is that anyone can make a few coppers by putting out half an hours worth of banging on the kitchen table.

Pete: My idea of the bad thing is when you get bands like The Cure releasing extra tracks on the cassette only (referring to the cassette boom in general)

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE (AS I HAVEN'T HEARD IT) THE MUSIC THAT FRENZID MELON ARE DOING AT THE MOMENT?

Pete: Have you ever heard Val Doonican singing in the bath?

Barry: I think it's really good.

Both together in perfect stereo: BIZARRE!

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACHIEVE WITH FALLING A?

Pete: We'll let you know that one. We're looking into it at the moment.

Barry: Yeah.

AND FINALLY THE DREADED FUTURE PLANS QUESTION?

Pete: The dreaded answer is that we hope to get back to doing some gigs and bring out some records.

Any bands or artists etc. (anything creative) contact us at our address:

FALLING A RECORDS AND PUBLISHING
56 MADEIRA ROAD
HOLLAND-CN-SEA
CLACTON
ESSEX. CO15 5NE

We hope to be active again in some form by September.

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SURROUNDED BY MASKS

Surrounded By Masks come from Ipswich and were formed in March via an ad. in the N.M.E. by Phil Fast (of Synchronesh fame).

The line up is: Viv Beeton- Synths, voice
Phil Fast- Bass, voice
Frank Harrison- Guitar, voice
Weazle- Drums

A fifth member is likely to be added soon. (probably has been)

They haven't performed live yet but hope to soon.

"We would like people to listen to our music and hopefully get something out of it. To provoke people into thought and action, rather than just entertain them."

They'd like to release material on their own label from the point of view of having control though it might not be financially viable.

I'll try and get some more stuff on the group for No.3.



CASSETTES

NEW CRIMINALS: THE NEW CRIMES COMPILATION TAPE

A compilation tape put together by New Crimes fanzine from Southend featuring groups that have appeared in it.

Right side one, first off are The Sinyx from Rayleigh. Their three tracks are called 'Animal', 'Suicide' and 'Fight' so I'll give you a guess at what sort of music they play. Yeah (real?) punk. Cynics would dismiss them straight off but 'Animal' is really good but the other two are a bit of a mess.

The Subhumans are another er.. punk group and are very, very fast. After a few plays 'Parasites' stands out although the other two tracks 'It's gotta get worse' and 'Drugs of Youth' are quite good.

Something different, 86:Mix are a bit more experimental, they remind me a bit of The Fall especially on 'Describe Yourself'. 'My desert is a city' is great, reggaeish bass with some good guitar. 'The Party' is an instrumental which sounds similar to, though much better than, Section 25. Best group so far.

Side two: Stripecy Zebras are a bit of a laugh, with song titles called 'Sgt. Bilko plays pop', 'Greta Garbo goes shopping' and 'Monsters on T.V.' they can't really be gloomy modernes. They play a sort of garage punk?, great fun especially 'G.G. goes shopping'.

A.P.F. Brigade (Anarchy, Peace and Freedom) are two guys and a drum machine. Their first track 'The Professionals' is, of course, about the army and is very good., the drum machine gives it a different feel. 'Ban the Bomb' is O.K. but 'No Effect' is just a row.

You've probably already read the piece on Flux Of Pink Indians so I'll just say that all their three tracks are excellent, especially the eerie 'Life After Death'.

Last, but not least, Enola Death with two tracks, 'Fox Hunting' and 'The Sun Says', recorded in a garden shed. The music won't set the world alight, just acoustic guitar, bass(which I can't hear) and boxes and a watering can for drums, but the words are very good especially 'Fox Hunting':

Foxes were put here for our pleasure/Things to kill during times of leisure
and

Here come the hunt sabateurs in their van/We'll kill them all if we can/What right have they got to stop our kill/Don't they know it's a game of fun and skill.

New Criminals is available from - New Crimes

c/o 360 Victoria Avenue
Southend on sea
Essex. SS2 6NA

It costs just £1.25 inc. p&p. Cheques/ p.o.'s payable to G. Burnett. Or send a blank C60 and a S.a.e.

SPECIAL DUTIES 6 TRACK CASSETTE (RHYTHMICK RECORDS)

I saw Special Duties in Colchester and wasn't very impressed but this is very good. Quite expensive for just 6 tracks but then again it costs £1 for a single nowadays, and the sound quality is excellent.

First number is 'I am the Curse' which I thought was a Waxwork Dummies song, but as Stuart used to be in Special Duties I suppose it is theirs. Anyway it's great.

'S.P.G' is full of sirens etc., just a very good rock song with very good lyrics.

'Violent Society' is fast and angry. The next track 'I think of You' is the best. It reminds me of Buzzcocks, that's good enough for me, especially the singing and the lyrics. It would make a great single. '(Stiff Little) Dub' is, yeah, reggae. Can white men play reggae? Who gives a toss, if the music's O.K that's fine by me. And this is. I've got an extra track on my copy 'You're doing yourself no good', which is a limited edition bonus track. It's very raw and energetic, remember '77?

If you want a copy, it's worth it, send £1.40 to: Rythmick Records

50 Ernest Road

Wivenhoe

Essex CO7 9LQ

OR try Parrot in Colchester.

THE WONDERS OF MEDICAL SCIENCE

TERRY'S LEFT EAR / I'M DEAD (GLUM TAPES)

I'M
DEAD

Two tapes from I'm Dead who are (is) Keith Chapman playing bass, guitar, drum machine and singing, not very well at times. The sound quality isn't very good, probably because they're recorded from one machine onto another, so a lot of the songs suffer due to this.

'The Wonders of Medical Science' is the first tape by Keith as 'I'm Dead' and isn't very good. On a lot of the tracks the sound is bad and the songs sound very similar. However a few are quite good, notably 'Sidesaddle', 'Final Thought's (great bass) and 'Trail of an Innocent Victim' which is very good. It features a French judge? rambling on with guitar and drum over it. Very effective.

Much better is 'Terry's Left Ear', the sound quality is better and the songs are much stronger. The best tracks are 'Too Old', 'Wasted Youth', 'Where there's a will (there has got to be a relative)' and 'Policeman'.

I've just realised I haven't said what the music's like. Well if you imagine a guitar, bass and drum machine that's it! I can't think of any comparisons. A good thing?

If you want either of the tapes they cost £1 or a blank C60 each + a s.a.e.

from: Keith Chapman
31 Hall Estate
Goldhanger
Maldon
Essex.

'I'm Dead 3' is nearly finished and will be released under the title 'As yet untitled'.

GARAGELAND

You're absolutely right. No one ever sends away for those

rotten cassettes — therefore
can I have all of those CB's you
couldn't get rid of?
Glum tapes Goldhanger, Essex.
Don't get fresh. — PM

M.M.E. 4/7/81

What a wag!!

Funeral Directors

YMCA Chelmsford



I'd seen the Funeral Directors just before Xmas with Waxwork Dummies and thought they were good so I was looking forward to seeing them again. There's now 5 Directors with Lawrence (Waxwork Dummies) guesting? on guitar. With two guitars they make even more of a row than before, the songs are almost unbearable. But who cares?, they're mad. The singer stalks around, breaks the stage, makes a row. Apart from the guitarist, they're all decked out in wierd costumes. The drummer looks like Cruella de Ville or a witch, Lawrence is a monk, the bass player is done up in top hat and layers of make up and the singer just looks great with red hair sticking up like horns, morning suit and blood splattered gloves.

A Funeral Directors record/tape would probably be awful but live (visually) they're great. See them if you can, you won't forget them in a hurry.

The bright young things of London hardly turned out in force for this event, another "label" night, this time a showcase for Mute Records, Daniel Miller's organisation. Still, despite being about half full, the Lyceum certainly looked happier than it did for Cabaret Voltaire/Throbbing Gristle/Clock DVA earlier this year. People actually seemed to be enjoying themselves, although whether this was due entirely to the music is another question - maybe the same flux of gyrating poseurs could be found in Le Kilt or Studio 21, dancing to the same music played in the intervals in the Lyceum. This time, however, the usual flow of Heaven 17 and Kraftwerk was halted by film shows extolling the virtues of industrial clothing, eye visors and bodybuilding. Still, to the music.

Furious Pig are an acapella four-piece whose style of delivery and crude minimalism were not to everybody's liking. Perhaps they were not electronic enough! Personally, I found them interesting enough at the start of their set, although towards the end I was in agreement with the majority being quite relieved when they finally left the stage. Palais Schaumberg came next. They are from Hamburg in Germany and were quite excellent, sounding like a mixture of DAF, Cabaret Voltaire and PiL, but coming across as very original. The line-up consisted of drummer, rythm and tape operator, bassist, keyboards player and guitarist/vocals. Definitely a band to watch out for. Rather predictably, guest DJ was Dave Archer of Studio 21, leading on "one of the best bands around at the moment," Depeche Mode. In fact, they were very good indeed, visually and musically. The three relentless synths of Vince Clark, Martin Gore and Andrew Fletcher were faultlessly played, backing up David Gahan's flexible voice perfectly. They encored with 'Photographic' from the 'Some Bizarre Album' and a version of Bryan Ferry's 'Price of Love', and were very enthusiastically recieved. FAD GADGET, the "headliner" if there is such a thing in an event of this kind, made a stunning entrance. Dressed in a Commedia dell 'Arte character, perhaps Scaramouche, he repeatedly hammered a drum synth whilst a steadily increasing wall of sound built up, suddenly breaking into 'Newsreel' as the backing musicians, including two percussionists, took their places. All, I hasten to add, were dressed very sillily, ragged wombat's suits and dunces hats amongst other things. The long set that followed included all of the singles, including extended versions of 'Make Room' and 'Ladyshave' and most of the "Fireside Favourites" LP. Fad was perhaps the most energetic performer I've seen, at times becoming quite demented, kicking scenery about, climbing onto the PA, braining himself with a syn-drum - you know, all the usual stuff expected of the budding "futurist". Encoring with 'Ricky's Hand' and 'State of the Nation', the Fads ambled off the stage to ecstatic applause.

Viv Beeton.

THE CURECHELMSFORD ODEON

Trying out new ideas, The Cure decide to dispense with a support band (a good idea as far as the Odeon and other seated venues are concerned) and treat us all to a film instead. A good idea, I thought, until I saw the film that is. Carnage Visors is 30 minutes of crap, though no doubt it's full of hidden meanings. All it consisted of was a black and white film of a sort of meccano figure twisting, turning and changing shape. At the side of the screen, stills from the film are shown, in colour, onto two smaller screens. Wow! Even worse is the soundtrack. A long instrumental piece by the Cure, awfull. A waste of time.

The Cure come on amidst a sea of pretty lights as soon as the film finishes and start churning out a load of new songs, all of which sound exactly the same. Slow and boring. No one dances, you can't, just stand and watch, clap at the end. Whatever happened to all those jolly pop tunes they used to write. Oops, spoke too soon, they play some earlier, much better material, 'Killing an Arab', '10.15' (their best song), 'Play for Today', 'Fire in Cairo' and 'Three Imaginary Boys', great stuff. This is what they (I) want!

They finish predictably with a long version of 'A Forest', how did that get in the charts and their other singles didn't ? They did a couple of encores and left. A disappointing night.

THE ADICTS/WAXWORK DUMMIES/SPECIAL DUTIES/SPASMODIC CARESS

EMBASSY SUITE, COLCHESTER

The Colchester Punk Festival featuring four local bands all of whom I'd heard of but never seen (except Waxwork Dummies).

First on, surprisingly, were Spasmodic Caress from Clacton. They had a track on 4.A.D's 'Presages' then, I think, split up or changed there line up. Anyway, despite practically no crowd reaction they played a very good set. A four piece they play modern music? which is very interesting(not as in self indulgent crap) and dance-able. I've forgotten the song titles, as usual, but the best song was 'Computer Error' (I think). I'll look forward to seeing them again.

Special Duties got the crowd going a bit more but were a bit of a disappointment. After a few numbers they got a bit boring and stale. They played 'I am the Curse' (the Waxwork Dummies song), an Undertones song, the title of which I've forgotten, and 'Let's Dance'. None of the other songs really stood out and their set dragged on (and on).

Much better were Chelmsford's very own Waxwork Dummies who get better all the time.

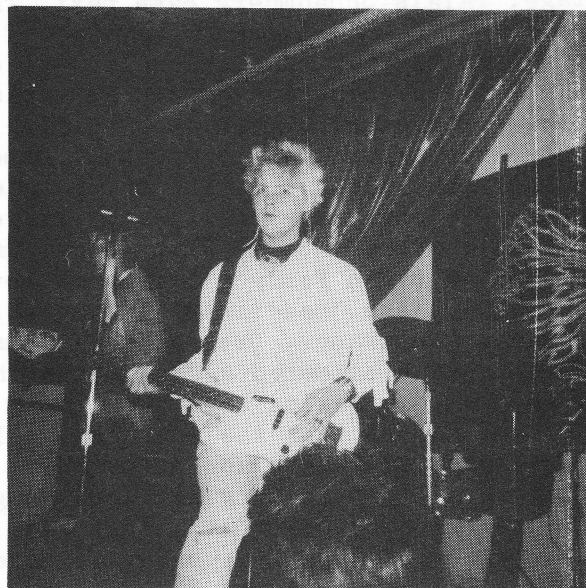
Now down to a three piece following the departure (kicking out?) of singer Mould, Lawrence takes over most of the vocals.

They only played a short set but were the best group. As I forgot to mention in the last issue they play a sort of tribal punk, don't laugh it's very good.

Starting as usual with a sort of chant, don't know what it's called, they then play 'Still', 'I am the Curse' a new song 'My Daddy is a Vampire' and a few more.

Though they didn't play 'Waxworks' which is one of their best songs.

I only heard a few songs by The Adicts, and then I was busy trying to flog some fanzines, so it would be unfair to judge them on this. They were O.K. but nothing special.



SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES

CHELMSFORD ODEON

I got to the Odeon at 8 and found that John Cooper Clarke had been on. Shit! I was looking forward to seeing him more than I was the Banshees. Either the doors were opened very early (highly unlikely) or he did a very short set.

Next came a short animated film called Ubu. Unlike The Cure's film a couple of months ago this one is worth watching, it's hilarious. The film's all about Pa and Ma Ubu. Pa decides to kill the king, which he does, so he becomes ruler. But the prince escapes to the mountains. Pa is a bad ruler and the people aren't happy. The prince comes back and fights a battle with Pa which he wins and gets the throne back. Pa and Ma end up lazing in a boat floating on the ocean. End of film, aah!!

By the time the Banshees come on the place is packed, and full of bouncers strutting around keeping most people in the seating area. They start off with 'Israel' while a load of clouds float by behind them, very pretty. 'Halloween', 'Spellbound' and 'Arabian Knights' follow, all of which are excellent. Apart from those four and two oldies 'Pull to bits' and the super 'Mirage' the rest of the set isn't very special. Until the last song 'Happy House' which I reckon is one of their best.

Just one encore, the song which I'd expected, a manic version of 'Helter Skelter' featuring Siouxsie clambering all over the P.A. Quite a good gig and much better than when they last played here.